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Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 16 December 1993, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/84 B, entitled "Development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States", of which the relevant operative paragraphs read as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
>
> "...
>
> "4. Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, particularly those from the Balkan region, and of international organizations, as well as of competent organs of the United Nations, on the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region and on measures and preventive activities aimed at creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans by the year 2000;
>
> "5. Decides to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the subject at its fiftieth session."

2. Pursuant to the request contained in that resolution, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale, requested Member States to provide the relevant information on the matter. Replies received from Governments are reproduced in section II of the report. Any other replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

AUSTRIA

[Original: English]

[31 May 1995]

3. Austria supports all efforts aimed at creating favourable conditions for a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the Balkans. The centrepiece for stability in this area is a just political solution based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and international law. Only such a solution will promise to be enduring.

4. Complementary to such an agreement, efforts aimed at longer-term stability will have to address, inter alia, the question of refugees and displaced persons, the establishment of truly democratic institutions, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of national minorities, and economic rehabilitation. To achieve this, concerted action by the international community through national efforts and through the relevant international organizations will be needed.

5. Austria would like to dwell on one particular aspect of longer-term stability in the Balkans, namely the question of military security.

6. The JNA, the armed forces of the former Yugoslavia, was considered to be the fifth largest army in Europe. The major part of this army was taken over by Serbia/Montenegro ("Federal Republic of Yugoslavia"), one of the five successor States of the former Yugoslavia. The armed forces of Serbia/Montenegro possess about 60 per cent of the battle tanks, 85 per cent of the armoured combat vehicles (ACVs), 65 per cent of the artillery pieces and 85 per cent of the combat aircraft and attack helicopters of the former JNA, although the size of the territory and of the population of Serbia/Montenegro is less than 40 per cent of those of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The armed forces of Serbia/Montenegro are stronger in terms of quantity and quality than those of most of its neighbours.

7. While most of the neighbouring countries of the former Yugoslavia are bound by the agreements under the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) limiting the personnel strength and the major conventional weapons systems of their armed forces, States which have emerged on the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia seem to be engaged in an arms race endangering the stability of the whole region. Such a development is particularly threatening because this region has for nearly 3 1/2 years been the scene of the bloodiest war in Europe since 1945. There is also a high propensity in this region for further violence due to traditional animosities, latent ethnic tensions and new enmities. It is therefore imperative that the military imbalances in this region be corrected through arms control measures and not through an arms build-up.

8. It goes without saying that negotiations on arms control measures for south-eastern Europe can only begin once a peace agreement between all parties to the conflict has been achieved and the relations between all the States which have emerged on the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia normalized. However, in parallel to the peace efforts undertaken by the international community, one should consider how a political settlement could be reinforced by a set of measures for military stability. Without military stability peace in this area would remain fragile. At the first session of the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation on 22 September 1992, Hungary proposed as "food for thought" regional negotiations on the establishment of a stable balance of armed forces between all new States on the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the lowest possible levels. Starting from this proposal a group of countries has developed a number of ideas pertinent to a possible arms control regime for south-eastern Europe.

9. The concept is not aimed against any country; it should meet the security needs of all the countries in the region. It is based on the idea that the maximum levels of holdings of conventional armaments and equipment as well as limits for personnel of the independent States created on the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia shall be commensurate with their legitimate defence needs.

10. The concept comprises the following elements:

(a) The maximum levels of holdings and personnel limits of these States shall be agreed by them in regional negotiations with the participation of other concerned OSCE States. The agreed levels of individual States shall take into account the principle of sufficiency. Taken together, these levels shall not exceed the holdings of the States which existed before 1991 in this region;

(b) Conventional armaments and equipment of the successor States of the former Yugoslavia shall include at least the five categories of conventional armaments and equipment limited by the CFE treaty;

(c) Paramilitary forces shall be limited in order to prevent a circumvention of obligations;

(d) All irregular forces in the region shall be disbanded. An effective verification of reductions and holdings shall be established;

(e) In addition to the obligations undertaken by these States, a set of appropriate confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs) and stabilizing measures will be agreed among all regional States. Thus, the arms control regime for south-eastern Europe would consist of two tiers of commitments.

11. Obviously such negotiations can only begin once all States of the region fully participate in international and regional organizations offering an appropriate framework. However, it would be important for all the parties to a political settlement, in the context of such a settlement, to agree in principle to the concept of military stability in south-eastern Europe. Early progress in the negotiations on arms control, disarmament, as well as confidence- and security-building in south-eastern Europe, could be enhanced through a variety of incentives offered by the international community.

12. Although a priority task of these negotiations might be the elaboration of special CSBMs and stabilizing measures reinforcing a peace agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, arms control through limitations and, where necessary, reductions should be on the agenda from the very beginning.

BULGARIA

[Original: English]

[30 August 1995]

13. Situated in South-Central Europe, parts of which have today become the arena of one of the most intractable conflicts in modern history, the Republic of Bulgaria attaches primary importance to regional security and arms control issues. A particular emphasis is put on the further enhancement of good-neighbourly relations as a basic prerequisite for the establishment of an atmosphere of peace, security and cooperation in the region, as well as on the entire European continent.

14. In pursuing this goal Bulgaria has signed treaties on friendly relations and cooperation with Greece, Turkey, Albania and Romania. Through regular high-level political contacts and broadening of economic cooperation with its neighbours Bulgaria contributes greatly to the stability in South-Central Europe.

15. Bulgaria has also signed bilateral confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM) agreements with Greece and Turkey complementary to the OSCE Vienna Document 1994, which provide for lower thresholds for notification and observation. A similar agreement is expected to be signed soon with Romania. There seems to be a common understanding among the above States that bilateral CSBMs, once agreed, should lead to greater transparency in military activities, thus having a stabilizing effect, especially in border areas, and stimulating contacts between the military of the respective States at the lowest possible level.

16. However, promoting multilateral cooperation in the region and achieving comprehensive security and confidence in South-Central Europe are impossible under the conditions of the continuing conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

17. Regretfully, the international community has not been able so far to find a peaceful settlement. In order to avoid this region becoming the source of a broader and far more devastating conflict, which would impact on the whole European continent, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria would like to submit to the attention of the international community three sets of tasks which require urgent consideration and immediate action:

(a) First, to reach, as soon as possible, a peaceful, lasting and balanced settlement to the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia;

(b) Second, to prevent the "spillover" of the conflict beyond its present limits;

(c) Third, to start laying even now, the foundations for lasting stability, security and cooperation in the South-Central European region as an integral part of a united Europe of democratic values and institutions.

18. Bulgaria has systematically pursued policies designed to support the efforts of the international community aimed at resolving and containing the conflict on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. Bulgaria has consistently and in good faith implemented United Nations Security Council sanctions as an instrument for achieving a negotiated settlement to the conflict, notwithstanding the strong negative impact on the country's economy. The crisis in the former Yugoslavia has, in fact, blocked Bulgaria's traditional transport and community links to the rest of Europe.

19. Security and stability are multidimensional. Overcoming the serious economic problems and integrating the infrastructure of the region with the whole of Europe are of paramount importance not only to Bulgaria, but also to the whole south-central part of the continent. In this respect the third set of tasks indicated above should not be postponed until the post-conflict period. The effort should result in the elaboration of a common forward-looking

comprehensive stability- and security-enhancing approach, as well as in practical steps for its implementation.

20. In the arms control field, Bulgaria shares the view that the establishment of a future harmonized arms control regime should combine measures of an all-European and a regional character, reflecting in every concrete situation the concept of indivisible security. Any disproportional concentration of armaments, especially when combined with a lack of control mechanisms, could have a negative impact on security and stability. Therefore, the establishment of a credible system of arms control and SCBMs for the territory of the former Yugoslavia will be an essential part of the comprehensive post-war settlement. The relevant international bodies like the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe should play a very important role in this respect.

21. In order to realize the concept of a peaceful, stable and secure South-Central European region as a part of the whole European continent, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria would like to put forward the following suggestions:

(a) Reaffirmation of the basic standards of good-neighbourly relations and the existing internationally recognized borders, as well as of all OSCE principles and norms in the regional context;

(b) Development of trans-border cooperation including modernization and upgrading of check-points and border-crossing and customs procedures, thus facilitating the free movement of commodities, services, capital and people, as well as promoting cooperation at the local level;

(c) Elaborating ways and means of overcoming the stagnation and injecting economic dynamism into the region through infrastructure development and properly structured foreign investment and financial and technical assistance;

(d) Development, upgrading and interconnection of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures in the region with the trans-European networks as a major instrument for fostering sustained economic growth;

(e) Further improvement of the legal basis for trade and commerce, as well as rapid expansion of bilateral trade flows through trade promotion facilities and mechanisms;

(f) Promoting long-term cooperation for social and economic rehabilitation and for building democratic institutions and civic societies in an environment of political stability and economic growth.

22. The Government of the Republic of Bulgaria is ready to contribute actively to the implementation of these goals.

CHILE

[Original: Spanish]

[31 May 1995]

23. Chile supports all efforts by the international community, and primarily by the parties concerned, to achieve peace in the region.

CROATIA

[Original: English]

[26 July 1995]

24. As a Central European, Mediterranean and Danubian country, Croatia is vitally interested in the maintenance of peace, stability and cooperation and the strengthening of European integration processes in the entire region. Hence the special importance Croatia attaches to a real, efficient and lasting transformation of the whole of South-Eastern Europe, including the Balkans, into a zone of good-neighbourly relations, stability, peace and cooperation, including the permanent stabilization of overall relations in this part of the continent.

25. Croatia supports United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/84 B on the development of good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States and awaits the report by the Secretary-General to the fiftieth session of the Assembly in the hope that it will give a realistic account of the state of affairs in the region and contain specific and well-elaborated initiatives, as well as proposed measures and actions for urgent stabilization, economic reconstruction and development of these areas, including the establishment of good neighbourliness in the interest of both the region and Europe and the international community as a whole. In this connection Croatia is ready to make its full and active contribution and assist the Secretary-General and the United Nations institutions.

26. The south-east of Europe is a central and unavoidable point in any general geo-strategic definition and elaboration of the Euro-Asian system of security. Due to its historic experience of mixing and conflicting civilizations, due to the diversity of interests manifested by big powers and unresolved national issues, this part of the European continent has been more often exposed to instability, conflicts and wars than characterized by stability and peace.

27. In addition to considerable material and human resources, this area has an exceptional value as an indispensable link between the European West and East, North and South, as well as between Europe and Central Asia or the Middle East.

28. The collapse of the communist system and the end of cold war, accompanied by the victory of democracy in most States arisen from the former Yugoslavia, have brought this region into a new stage of history by having created the conditions required for the final self-determination of nations and complete

emancipation of States in this region. The former Yugoslav federation has disappeared as part of this historic process and new internationally recognized, independent and sovereign successor States with equal rights have emerged.

29. Croatia firmly believes that the indisputable fact of the existence of these sovereign States provides a very sound and the only possible basis for establishing, building and strengthening a new regional system of security and stability, based on the respect for independence and territorial integrity of all and each of the States in the region being equally responsible for the maintenance of regional peace.

30. The United Nations Security Council resolutions 757 (1992) and 777 (1992) and General Assembly resolution 47/1 from 1992, as well as the Opinion 9 of the Arbitration Commission of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, confirm that the State formerly known as Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) ceased to exist and that neither of the equal successor States could claim the exclusive right to the succession of the rights and obligations of the former Yugoslav federation.

31. SFR Yugoslavia finally ceased to exist in the war of aggression waged by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and Serbia - following illegal decisions by a part of the Presidency of that federal State - against the former constituent units: Slovenia, Croatia and then Bosnia and Herzegovina.

32. Prior to the proclamation of independence Croatia and Slovenia, both jointly and separately, came up with several proposals for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the former State: they first proposed a confederation and, finally, a commonwealth of independent States. This was met with resolute and outright rejection by Serbia and its leadership whereas, at the same time, JNA completed intensive preparations for and then started its aggression against each of the mentioned States with the aim of coming to and drawing the so-called western borders of Serbia.

33. This basic and indisputable responsibility for the ensuing crisis, war and suffering in the area is best exemplified by the international status, including within the United Nations and almost all international organizations, which the State that has caused and waged the war - Serbia or FRY (Serbia/Montenegro) - has held for several years, on which sanctions have been imposed and which has been excluded from virtually all international organizations.

34. Croatia believes that lasting stability in the Balkans and the south-east of Europe can be established only if it is based on the principle of full equality and equal rights and obligations of all States in the region. In this manner it will be possible to do away with the security vacuum which has opened the door to aggression and the ensuing war crisis, caused by the hegemonistic aspirations of Serbia and Montenegro to the sovereign territories of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, combined with the policy of the threat and use of force against other neighbouring countries.

35. One of the most obvious aspects of the open aggression and use of force against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is the continuous presence and activity of the manpower, including top-ranking officers, of the Yugoslav Army

in the parts of the sovereign territories of these two States Members of the United Nations. Such continuous presence of these troops is the main reason why the relations between the States of the area cannot be normalized.

36. Peace and good neighbourliness in the south-east of Europe and the Balkans can be ensured only by establishing an integral regional order of mutual relations in compliance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki and Copenhagen Documents and the Charter of Paris. Such a new regional order must be specifically based on independence, complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the existing States.

37. A prerequisite for overall normalization and the creation of conditions for good-neighbourly relations and cooperation is the application of and respect for the highest democratic standards in the area of human and minority rights. The elements of such a framework for the new regional order should include:

(a) Unconditional recognition without further delay of all new States within their internationally recognized borders, especially by "FRY" (Serbia and Montenegro), plus consistent and strict respect for these borders as condicio sine qua non for a just and lasting solution to any individual aspect of the crisis, as well as the stabilization of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and its position through implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions in accordance with the standards of international law. As far as Croatia is concerned such peaceful settlements imply complete restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Croatia within its internationally recognized borders, with full guarantees of minority rights given to the Serbian ethnic community in Croatia accompanied, should there be a need, by international monitoring. A peaceful settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be achieved by implementing the peace plan of the Contact Group and the Washington Agreements and through the establishment and international affirmation of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a model of and a precondition for, as well as a vital cornerstone of, a new balanced regional order. The stabilization of the position of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia implies in the first place that it should regulate its relations with the neighbouring States, subject to strict mutual respect for sovereignty, independence and non-interference in internal affairs and combined with proper guarantees of minority rights;

(b) Ensuring the right to safe and dignified return of all displaced persons and the reconstruction of war-ravaged areas, with preconditions to be created for continuous development assisted by the international community;

(c) Normalization of relations between the States in the region with consistent respect for international borders, the implementation of the highest European standards in dealing with minority issues and the inclusion of bilateral and multilateral instruments regarding minority issues in the Stability Pact in Europe, as well as addressing other open issues by political means, negotiations or through international mediation;

(d) The establishment of open relations and transparent cooperation among the States in the region in all areas, such as economy, trade, transport, telecommunications, environmental protection and other areas of common interest

for independent and versatile development of the States and of the region as a whole based on the openness of the region to all neighbouring regions in order to ensure unimpeded flow of people, goods and capital;

(e) Intensifying the process of including each individual State and, ultimately, the whole region in the integration of Europe, subject to the fulfilment of the existing conditions, especially with respect to human and civil rights, with international support and supervision through OSCE, the Council of Europe and other international institutions;

(f) The establishment of the CSBM system and stabilizing measures, including a balanced arms control system based on and within the framework of the CFE agreement, as initiated by Croatia within CSCE by the letter of 9 September 1993 from the Croatian President and as proposed by Croatia at the Rome CSCE Ministerial Conference of 30 November 1994.

38. Within OSCE Croatia continues to cooperate with several European States (Austria, Turkey, Hungary) in order to move the process formally in this direction once the right opportunity arises.

39. The new regional security order must be based on the existence of a defence potential necessary for the exercise of the right to national defence along with a new security system to be built in Europe, which is to say that:

(a) Military doctrines of the States in the region should be exclusively defensive and in all respects adapted to the international agreements on restricted use of military force and non-use of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons;

(b) The successor States to the former SFR Yugoslavia should reach an agreement on the highest level of armament they are allowed to keep, including manpower restrictions in conformity with their legitimate defence requirements;

(c) The highest potentials and manpower restrictions in the successor States to the former SFR Yugoslavia, taken together, should not exceed the level and restrictions fixed for the former SFR Yugoslavia to the effect that neither of the States can be allowed to have more than a fair share in the potential of the former SFR Yugoslavia (defence sufficiency principle);

(d) The conventional armament of the successor States to the former SFR Yugoslavia, thus restricted, should include all categories of weapons and equipment subject to CFE restrictions;

(e) Irregular forces should be disbanded;

(f) Manpower restrictions should comprise paramilitary troops;

(g) An efficient verification mechanism should be established to monitor arms reduction and adherence to the fixed ceiling. Also required is initial inspection to define the starting state of affairs;

(h) A set of appropriate stabilizing measures should be agreed.

40. It goes without saying that negotiations can begin only when all the States in the region accept the United Nations and OSCE principles and standards of international relations. Such negotiations should be conducted at the level of a regional group to be set up within the OSCE Forum for Cooperation in the Area of Security. Croatia will continue to contribute to the establishment of the kind of relations within OSCE and the United Nations which are likely to lead to a peaceful settlement in the region and good neighbourliness.

41. Adhering to the Charter of the United Nations, the standards of international law and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the principles defined within OSCE, since gaining independence Croatia has been actively engaged in developing good-neighbourly relations with all its direct and indirect neighbours. In this area significant results have been achieved in its relations with Albania, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and, especially, with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

42. Croatia attaches special importance to regional cooperation in Europe and thus pursues an active policy within the Central European Initiative, the Alps-Adria Working Community and the Community of Danube Countries.

43. Croatia is also actively engaged in negotiating the institutional links with the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe and is interested in taking part in the Partnership for Peace with the ultimate aim of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) itself. Croatia believes that the extension of the existing and the creation of new security instruments to encompass the countries of the region are an urgent and vital prerequisite for stabilization and overcoming the present security vacuum in this part of the Euro-Asian area. Croatia's views stem from its geo-strategic position and its political, economic, technological and cultural features, and are thus closely linked to its long-term strategic interests, including a political settlement to the crisis in the region as a precondition for democratic and independent development.

44. The new regional order in South-East Europe and the Balkans must be and can be based on the overall normalization of the relations between the Croatian and Serbian peoples, which is to say, between Croatia and Serbia. Such normalization should be based on mutual and permanent respect for the real national interests of the two peoples and their States, dealing with issues by peaceful political means and laying the foundation for cooperation between two completely independent and sovereign States. This implies proper solutions to the position of their respective ethnic communities, the Croatian in Serbia and the Serbian in Croatia.

45. Croatia is putting its best efforts to this end. However, any normalization process must be preceded by recognition of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina by FRY (Serbia/Montenegro), within their internationally recognized boundaries, as well as by public and legally binding renouncement of territorial gains achieved through illegal change of international borders by the use of force. It must also be preceded by cessation of any further military activities and armed violence against the neighbour States.

46. FRY (Serbia/Montenegro) is persistently refusing to commit itself to such recognition, although demanded to do so by Security Council resolutions, EU and the positions taken by the G7+1 (group of major industrialized countries plus the Russian Federation) and the Contact Group. The present attitude of the so-called FRY towards the sovereign and internationally recognized neighbouring States indicates that it is not really prepared for a peaceful settlement or for renouncing the territorial conquests achieved through open aggression against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the establishment of a new regional order in accordance with international law.

47. The existing international sanctions imposed on FRY (Serbia/Montenegro) as a crucial agent in regulating the regional relations and virtually the only means of international pressure must remain in force and be tightened. Any alleviation of the sanctions must be unequivocally accompanied by actual cessation of the aggressive actions by Belgrade and clear evidence of its firm commitment to the implementation of peaceful solutions as an irreversible process.

48. Since the emergence of the political crisis and the outbreak of war in South-East Europe Croatia has been consistently engaged in efforts to find a political solution to all the causes and consequences of the conflicts with the assistance and mediation of the international community. In adhering to such principles Croatia has accepted the internationalization of the problem and the presence of international representatives, including the presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO) on its soil, convinced that consistent, efficient and determined implementation of their mandates may lead to the desired progress towards peace.

49. At the same time, Croatia has been cooperative in the international community's peace endeavours to the maximum extent and has been proposing peace initiatives of its own.

50. With its democratic Constitution and the special Constitutional Law on Human Rights and the Rights of Ethnic Communities or Minorities Croatia has already laid down a constitutional framework for a lasting solution to the conflict and the safe existence of the Serbian minority in Croatia. These constitutional solutions were a precondition for the recognition of the Republic of Croatia by EC.

51. Thus the members of the Serbian ethnic community are guaranteed not only individual human and ethnic rights and cultural autonomy, but also local self-government in the areas where the Serbian population constituted a majority before the war, i.e. in the districts of Knin and Glina. Further, the Peace Initiative by the Croatian President Dr. Franjo Tudjman of 1 November 1993 on the peaceful reintegration of the occupied areas of Croatia envisages a strong commitment of the Croatian State to urgent reconstruction and development of these areas, combined with the realization of all social, educational, self-government and other rights of the population living there.

52. It was along these lines that Croatia negotiated in good faith and signed the Cease-fire Agreement plus several economic agreements (opening of traffic

routes, oil pipeline, etc.), striving to normalize the overall situation in the country and to create conditions for talks on the political aspects of peaceful reintegration of the occupied areas. However, the present self-proclaimed leadership of the Croatian Serbs broke all signed economic agreement by closing the motorway and the oil pipeline. They also broke the Cease-fire Agreement by continuing with their provocations and attacks on the free parts of Croatia and on parts of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

53. At the same time, FRY (Serbia/Montenegro), i.e. the Yugoslav Army, has continued with a direct military intervention and infiltration of personnel, troops and equipment in the occupied Croatian territories. Meanwhile, FRY (Serbia/Montenegro) have set up a new military command over the renegade forces of the Croatian Serbs, who are on FRY's payroll.

54. The responsibility for the absence of any progress towards a peaceful settlement lies with the rebel Serbs in Croatia, as well as the Bosnian Serbs when it comes to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At Belgrade's instigation and with its support, including military, the Croatian Serbs persevere in their policy of no conciliation by adamantly refusing to negotiate the peaceful reintegration of the occupied Croatian territories in defiance of all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly resolution 49/43, whereas the Bosnian Serbs reject the peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina of the Contact Group. Due to such an attitude towards the peace process and the complete inefficiency and inconsistency of the international peace mediators and the United Nations peace-keeping forces in the field, the current conflict is deteriorating and the prospects for its de-escalation have weakened and the chances of opening the way to a lasting political solution have diminished.

55. A peaceful solution to the present acute and extremely dangerous crisis - one that would end up in a stable regional order, equality of States and good neighbourliness in the region - requires the active engagement of the most responsible international forums, especially the Security Council and United Nations Secretary-General. An important role in it belongs to EU, OSCE, the Council of Europe and NATO. Important chances for concrete and creative engagement could be offered by the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations.

56. Croatia expects the United Nations Secretary-General to consult and take into account the ideas of these important regional institutions and organizations before submitting his report on the situation and prospects of transforming the Balkans into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation.

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

[Original: English]

[20 June 1995]

57. The present situation in the Balkans is characterized by the existence of many open issues, conflicts and opposed interests among the Balkan States, inherited from the past and not resolved up to this day. There have always been initiatives for development of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation, as well as for development of multilateral forms of cooperation in the Balkans. In certain periods the promotion of relations among the Balkan States by peaceful means was dominant. However, there have been periods when force was used for resolving the problems or the disputes.

58. The history of the Balkans is more a history of conflicts than a history of cooperation. Everything possible should be done to prevent the repetition of such a destiny in the future. This is possible. It depends on the political will and the readiness of the Balkan States and nations, and on European and world factors, to direct developments in that direction.

59. The geopolitical position of the Balkans has always been extremely important strategically to the non-Balkan Powers. The Balkans' natural resources, potential and other capacities have always been the cause for their constant interest in the region. This is why the situation in the Balkans has always influenced the nature of European and world politics, as well as the foreign policy of the European and world Powers. The two world wars lasted the longest in the Balkans. Illustrative is the fact of the long-lasting war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia.

60. All Balkan States are burdened with the past and with their history. Some forces and certain circles, which are not without influence, are promoting aspirations outside of their State. The myth and the tendency to create so-called "greater States" is also present. This makes the relations among Balkan States very sensitive. It also increases the mistrust between them. However, officially and publicly all Balkan States have declared themselves in favour of the development of good-neighbourly relations.

61. After the First and Second World Wars, there were initiatives for multilateral inter-Balkan cooperation. There were proposals for a Balkan Federation, Balkan treaties, Balkan non-nuclear arms zones, Balkan alliances in different areas and so on. There are proposals of this kind today, too, after the cold war. It is important to note that all Balkan States have been initiators of certain proposals. A certain number of these initiatives, for instance in the fields of sport, culture, humanitarian assistance and traffic, have been successful. Difficulties, however, have always arisen with the initiatives in the political field. The main reason for this, especially after the Second World War, was the division of the Balkan States on the basis of their political and ideological position and their membership in different military blocs. That results in the political field were limited was also due to the different positions of the Balkan States on the issue of national minorities, as well as to their unwillingness to abandon certain aspirations,

dogmas and double standards, and to accept reality and the accepted international standards and behaviour in the relations between States.

62. In such a situation the question whether the Balkan region could be transformed from a conflict zone or, as it is sometimes referred to, a "powder keg", into a zone of peace and cooperation, an integral part of an integrated Europe, has to be asked. The Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia considers this to be possible, realistic and indispensable. This can be most speedily achieved by strict observance of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and of General Assembly resolution 48/84 B by all Balkan and non-Balkan States and factors, and by taking and implementing decisive measures and activities with the aim of integrating all Balkan States into the European democratic processes and of preventing the use of force and other means contrary to international law in the resolution of the outstanding issues. In that the most important rule should be the respect of the accepted norms governing international relations and the observance of the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and political independence of all Balkan States.

63. In the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States an important contribution can be made not only by the Balkan States themselves, but also by the non-Balkan States, especially those which have already developed important cooperation with the former. Important contribution can also be made by the United Nations Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the specialized agencies and others. The contribution by the European organizations and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, and especially by the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the European Union could also be of great significance.

64. The implementation of the objectives set forth in the resolution 48/84 B requires the preparation of a separate programme of measures and activities for the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region aimed at creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation by the year 2000. This is the basic request of the resolution. The most competent authority of the United Nations to prepare such a programme is the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with OSCE and the Council of Europe. The General Assembly could adopt this programme at its fifty-first or fifty-second session.

65. There are many materials (reports, studies) on the Balkans done by governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as by competent authors (Balkanologists). Different ideas for the destiny and the past of the Balkan region, the Balkan States and the Balkan nations are considered in them. But there is little on the vision of the future development of the Balkans, its integration in the processes of development of a new Europe, in the Europeanization of the Balkans in the sense of implementing the positive modern achievements in cooperation among States, and in the current integration processes; these should also be the main concern of the proposed programme.

66. In order for a credible programme to be prepared, it would be necessary for the Secretary-General to prepare a separate report on the Balkans, on the basis of the existing documentation and on additional research, undertaken as part of the preparation of that report. This report/study could be the basis for the

preparation of the proposed programme, which should be called "Agenda on the Europeanization of the Balkans". This report could give an overview of the situation in the Balkans. Special attention should be paid to the outstanding issues and to the ways they could be resolved, to the prospects for the Balkans and its Europeanization. In view of the fact that the nature, quality and scope of the relations between the Balkan States differ, it would be useful, as part of the report, to prepare and propose "a model for modern European good-neighbourly relations among the Balkan States". All Balkan States would like to be admitted to the European Union as soon as possible (Greece is a member) and therefore it would be advisable to prepare this part of the Report in close cooperation with the European Union and with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

67. It would be useful if the report and the agenda of the Secretary-General, before being considered and adopted/noted by the General Assembly, could be discussed and verified by an ad hoc forum (symposium or round table) organized by the Secretary-General and by a Balkan State interested in hosting such a meeting. Renowned experts on Balkan issues could also be invited to take part as independent experts. The Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is prepared, in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to organize such a meeting in 1996 or 1997.

68. The proposed agenda for the Europeanization of the Balkans could also refer to current Balkan topics. It could be an important contribution towards resolving the consequences of the present war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, especially by securing the necessary international support for the reconstruction and development of these States after the war. It is well known that all Balkan States and other neighbouring States have sustained huge material damages and losses due to the war, as well as to the consequences of the United Nations sanctions against FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The necessity of international action for the reconstruction of the Balkans after the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, after the end of the present Balkan crisis, is obvious.

69. The proposed agenda could also be useful to normalize the relations between the Republic of Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). Furthermore, this agenda could also be of use in resolving the current outstanding issues between Albania and the FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), then between Turkey and Greece, between Albania and Greece, between Romania and Hungary, between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, as well as for the elimination of the existing impediments and barriers between Balkan States.

70. Special attention could be paid in the proposed agenda to the position and the role of the national minorities, which are numerous in the Balkan region and have different status. Minority issues in the Balkans have always been the causes of conflict.

71. The bilateral relations between the Balkan States in all spheres - legislative, economic, cultural, sport - and cooperation between different social and interest associations should also be referred to in the proposed

Agenda. It would be useful if the basic data/facts concerning each of the Balkan States were noted. Another useful matter that should be emphasized in the agenda is the necessary activities that the Balkan States should undertake in the process of their Europeanization (membership in the European institutions, adoption and implementation of the European standards in all spheres, in the development of democracy, in the observance of human rights, etc). It is very important that the agenda should be a means for speeding up the process of including the Balkan States in European integration. It should be in the interest of all Balkan States and they all should benefit from it. In this way the agenda will be a very important contribution towards strengthening Balkan and European security.

72. It is expected that the Secretary-General's report on resolution 48/84 B will cover essential issues and that it will be action oriented. There is hope that it could open up new prospects for the Balkan States and that it will help in the realization of their aspirations for speedy integration into the European structures. It will be also a good opportunity for the Secretary-General to give an overview of a number of current issues in the Balkans. It would be useful if the Secretary-General could inform the General Assembly about the current numerous activities being carried out in the Balkans by the United Nations, the specialized agencies, OSCE, the Council of Europe and other competent international organizations.

73. The Balkans have been the centre of interest of the international community for several years. The United Nations is present in the region with its peace-keeping forces, then with humanitarian assistance and other activities. The European countries are also present, especially the members of the European Union. Present also are the United States of America, the Russian Federation and others. However, the expected results in terms of ending the war, helping the transition and resolving the outstanding issues and the Europeanization of the Balkan States are not satisfactory. One of the main reasons for the failure is the palliative attitude towards the difficult situation in the Balkans and marginal attention dedicated to preventive actions and to the development of good-neighbourly relations based on mutual respect and equality. It is clear that the Balkan States must observe and practice tolerance and live in peace as good neighbours. There is hope that this activity of the General Assembly, based on its resolution 48/84 B, in which the Secretary-General could play an important role, will be of essential help to the development of good-neighbourly relations in the region.

74. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, from the start of its independence, has committed itself to the development of good-neighbourliness and to follow the principle of equidistance in its relations with its neighbours and the European standards in the development of democracy, the rule of law, a market economy, the observance of human rights, including those of national minorities, and so on. It also committed itself to follow strictly the principles of territorial integrity, political independence and the resolution of problems by way of peaceful means and dialogue on the basis of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal matters of other States. It will continue to pursue this policy in the future.

75. The development of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is closely linked to the situation in the Balkans due to its geographical position. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia expects a lot from the resolution of the present situation, however difficult and in a state of crisis it is, and from the necessary reconstruction of the Balkans after the wars and the crisis and particularly from the Europeanization of the Balkans. Good-neighbourliness has no alternative and could greatly help this endeavour, which was the initial reason why the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has committed itself to the development of good-neighbourly relations among Balkan States and why it proposed resolution 48/84 B, adopted at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly without a vote.

TURKEY

[Original: English]

[31 May 1995]

76. In order to establish friendly relations with countries of the region and to contribute to peace and cooperation, Turkey has signed bilateral agreements with other Balkan countries on issues of good-neighbourliness, cooperation and security.

77. In addition, owing to the importance it attributes to confidence- and security-building measures in the Balkans, Turkey has played a leading role for the realization of bilateral confidence- and security-building measures. Given the principle of indivisibility of security, these measures have a positive impact on confidence and security not only in the region, but also in the OSCE. The "1990 Sofia Document" on confidence- and security-building measures between Turkey and Bulgaria was the first step taken in this direction. The "1990 Sofia Document" was later expanded and is still in effect as the "1992 Edirne Document". On the other hand, a similar agreement, the "1995 Tirana Document", was concluded between Albania and Turkey on 6 February 1995. Efforts are under way to adopt similar mechanisms with other Balkan countries.

78. All of the above-mentioned documents have been prepared within the framework of the OSCE and on the basis of adjusting the Vienna Document on confidence- and security-building measures to regional needs and considerations.

79. Adoption of bilateral measures between Turkey and Bulgaria for the first time in 1990 has been a model for other OSCE countries. Following the Sofia Document, similar documents were adopted by other Balkan countries. On the other hand, during the deliberations for the Vienna Document, upon various suggestions inspired by the process initiated with measures established between Bulgaria and Turkey, the issue of bilateral CBMs was referred to in the Vienna Document. Therefore, article 136 of the Document encourages the OSCE countries to develop transparency and confidence-building on a bilateral, multilateral or regional basis.

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

[Original: English]

[22 August 1995]

80. The British Government welcomes the initiative contained in General Assembly resolution 48/84 B to seek the views of member States on the development of good-neighbourly relations in the Balkan region and on measures and preventive activities aimed at the creation of a stable zone of peace and cooperation in the region by the year 2000.

81. The Balkan region has a long and tragic history of instability and conflict. The international community must find effective ways of promoting cooperation in the Balkans to ensure that the people of this troubled region can look forward to a peaceful and more prosperous future.

82. The British Government believes that any effort to promote peace and cooperation in the Balkans can only be effective when the conflict in the region has been resolved.

83. The British Government notes that the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia has commissioned a report on regional stability in the Balkans and hopes to draw on this report where necessary.

84. Before then there are confidence-building measures that might contribute to regional stability. They include mutual recognition by the republics of the former Yugoslavia. Mutual recognition would help provide a stable base for resolution of the conflict and subsequent efforts to promote regional cooperation. The British Government again urges all republics of the former Yugoslavia to recognize each other.

YUGOSLAVIA

[Original: English]

[5 June 1995]

85. Ever since the end of the Second World War, Yugoslavia has been a factor in the peace, stability and equitable cooperation in the Balkans.

86. At the initiative of Yugoslavia, a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Balkan countries was held at Belgrade in February 1988 which laid down the foundations for the process of multilateral cooperation among the countries of the region and opened up perspectives for better understanding and cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields. At the meeting, the high-level representatives of the Balkan countries paved the way for the development of cooperation and the promotion of relations in the region. At more than 100 meetings held between 1988 and 1991, the countries established an extensive multilateral political dialogue at various levels on crucial issues of intra-Balkan relations and regional cooperation.

87. The contribution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to various forms of cooperation among the countries of the Danube basin has been very great indeed. This has been evident in its continuous efforts to ensure free navigation on the Danube, connect the Rhine-Main-Danube system with the Yugoslav Dunav-Tisa-Dunav system; link the European seas via its inland waterways and modernize and facilitate the use of Danubian ports which it sees as full of potential for economic progress and integration.

88. An example of long-term bilateral cooperation in the Balkans is Yugoslavia's cooperation with Romania in the field of the production and exploitation of electrical energy, crowned with the construction of Iron Gates I and II hydroelectric power plants on the Danube and very developed cooperation between the electric energy systems of the two countries.

89. On the basis of an agreement between Yugoslavia and Albania, part of the Yugoslav territory was used for the construction on Albanian territory of the Fierza hydroelectric power plant which solved the problem of the production and supply of electrical power in Albania. Yugoslavia also initiated cooperation between the electric energy systems of the two countries and subsidized the construction and subsequent operation of a section of the Podgorica-Božaj railway line, used primarily for transit of Albanian exports to European markets.

90. However, even in the conditions of sanctions, blockade and war in its neighbourhood, the FR of Yugoslavia continues to work with equal resolve, both bilaterally and multilaterally, on the prevention of the escalation of the crisis, the maintenance of stability and cooperation and on the promotion of dialogue and confidence in the Balkans. The partial suspension of the sanctions gave an impetus to the activities of the Balkan countries to that end, however symbolic they may be.

91. In this period the FR of Yugoslavia renewed its political dialogue with almost all of its traditional neighbours. On several occasions the FR of Yugoslavia expressed its readiness for dialogue and the renewal of cooperation to Albania on the basis of equality, good-neighbourliness and non-interference. Ties and cooperation in the fields of culture, education, transport and sport have intensified. Direct contacts with economic associations and other factors of economic development have been established; inter-State legal instruments have been prepared in preparation for the restoration of cooperation after the lifting of sanctions.

92. The outbreak and escalation of the Yugoslav crisis put a sudden and violent end to the positive trends in regional political and economic developments. Finding a just and lasting solution to the consequences of the Yugoslav crisis is therefore the first precondition for the restoration and acceleration of the positive processes of cooperation, interlinkage and integration.

93. The civil war in some former Yugoslav republics has been used for piling up arms in this sensitive part of the Balkans. Arms have been, and continue to be, piled up in violation of United Nations Security Council arms embargo resolution 713 (1991). These violations threaten the peace process, the United Nations role in that process and the security of its peace-keeping forces.

Unfortunately, there has been no adequate reaction to these violations from the Security Council.

94. The FR of Yugoslavia fully supports the peace role of the United Nations in the settlement of the Yugoslav crisis. In the quest for a solution to the crisis in former Bosnia and Herzegovina, the FR of Yugoslavia supported all peace plans: the Coutilhero plan of 19 March 1992, the Vance-Owen plan of 2 January 1993, the Owen-Stoltenberg plan of 30 July 1993, the plan of action of the European Union of 22 November 1993 and the latest peace plan of the Contact Group of 5 July 1994. The FR of Yugoslavia also cooperated in drafting, and accepted, the Vance plan in November 1991, aimed at settling the problems between Knin-Zagreb, and it continues to consider the plan a valid basis for negotiations on reaching a final political solution.

95. In the process of normalization of the relations which has begun between the FR of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Croatia, the two countries opened, on the basis of reciprocity, their representative offices in Belgrade and Zagreb. The dialogue on political and humanitarian issues has been launched between the representatives of the two Governments.

96. Despite its great economic and political difficulties the FR of Yugoslavia continues to invest its maximum efforts in the process of the peaceful settlement of the crisis. Therefore, it rightly expects all other factors to associate themselves with the following important assumptions:

(a) Equal treatment of all parties to the conflict;

(b) Compliance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions, particularly the resolutions on the arms embargo, the status of the United Nations Protection Areas and the mandate of the peace-keeping forces;

(c) No military option and no use of force or threat of force by all factors in the crisis;

(d) Lifting of all sanctions imposed on the FR of Yugoslavia;

(e) Acceptance of the Contact Group plan as a basis for direct negotiations among the parties to the conflict on the solution to the crisis in former Bosnia and Herzegovina under the auspices of the United Nations and the Contact Group;

(f) Continuation of direct step-by-step negotiations between Knin and Zagreb on the basis of the Vance plan, without prejudice to the outcome of the final political solution;

(g) Withdrawal of Croatian military forces from all territories taken by force, in compliance with the cease-fire agreement of 29 March 1994, and respect for the role of the United Nations peace-keeping forces;

(h) Full reintegration of the FR of Yugoslavia into European and international forums, primarily OSCE and the United Nations General Assembly. The FR of Yugoslavia has every right to be reintegrated into these forums, not

only because it is a founding and an active member in the 50-year-long activity of the Organization, but also because it is one of the most active actors in the quest for a peaceful political solution to the Yugoslav crisis and an important factor in the future peaceful development in the Balkans and South-East Europe.

97. The solution to the crisis on this basis will create conditions for full normalization of relations between the FR of Yugoslavia and former Yugoslav republics. The FR of Yugoslavia has never been nor is it today, opposed to the recognition of the seceded Yugoslav republics. However, it is necessary first to solve the basic political problems brought about by their unilateral and forcible secession in order not to repeat the mistakes made by the premature recognition of the seceded republics by the European Union and other countries. This implies that the right of the FR of Yugoslavia to continue the international personality of the SFRY is not questioned.

98. The sanctions imposed on the FR of Yugoslavia are the basic limiting factor for the peace process, economic development and cooperation in the Balkans. Their further implementation serves to postpone the advent of peace and stabilization. The destructive economic, social, cultural and other consequences of the sanctions severely affect all neighbouring countries including the countries of South and South-East Europe.

99. The sanctions have interrupted the positive trends in the development of multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the Balkans and the processes of integration of the Balkans with other parts of Europe. In particular, they halted the democratic transition and development of the market economies in a number of countries.

100. The overall damage caused to the FR of Yugoslavia and the countries of South and South-East Europe since the establishment of the sanctions against the FR of Yugoslavia in May 1992 has amounted to about US$ 200 billion and two thirds of that damage has been suffered by the FR of Yugoslavia alone.

101. The damage caused by the sanctions deepens and widens the economic gap between the Balkans and Europe, heightens social tensions in each country and threatens to destabilize the Balkans and South-East Europe in the long run. Aware of this fact, Balkan and other countries have now launched several initiatives to have them lifted altogether. An increasing number of the States Members of the United Nations have publicly stated that the sanctions are contrary to the peace efforts, that they are inhuman, unacceptable and untenable as a method.

102. At the 53rd regular meeting of the Danube Commission at Budapest in April 1995, all the participating States agreed on a common initiative to liberalize the sanctions and simplify transit on the Danube. Furthermore, the meeting initiated, and the United Nations Security Council subsequently adopted, the (technical) resolution on the use of locks and navigation by Yugoslav vessels on the Danube.

103. At the Ministerial Meeting of the Black Sea Cooperation Countries in Athens on 14 April 1995, a joint appeal concerning the great damage caused by the sanctions was addressed to the United Nations Secretary-General and the United

Nations Security Council, signed by Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

104. The FR of Yugoslavia expects that this and other similar initiatives will be understood and supported, first of all by the United Nations Security Council. By his letter of 14 November 1994, Yugoslav Prime Minister Radoje Kontic informed the Security Council that Yugoslavia had fulfilled all the conditions set in Security Council resolutions 752 (1992) and 757 (1992). It is therefore necessary that the Security Council commits itself more resolutely to lifting the sanctions and thus provide for the renewal of all positive processes in the region and facilitate the accomplishment of the goal proclaimed at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly concerning the transformation of the Balkans into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation by the year 2000.

105. At the same time, the FR of Yugoslavia expects the United Nations to assume its share of responsibility under the programmes of economic restoration of the Balkans and the establishment of the conditions for strengthening the integration processes among the Balkan countries.

106. This is also the point of departure for all proposals and ideas aimed at transforming the Balkans into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation: the Balkans is an important integral part of Europe and its stability and rapid development would contribute to stability, development and positive processes in Europe as a whole. There can be no peace, stability and cooperation in Europe without stability, peace and cooperation in the Balkans.

107. Finding a peaceful and just solution to the Yugoslav crisis is the crucial prerequisite for the re-establishment of the balance in the Balkans and, by the same token, for its transformation into a zone of peace, stability and cooperation, and for the full integration of the Balkans in Europe as a natural factor of "the new European architecture". The crisis can be solved and stability and balance restored only through the principled approach of the major European and world factors and their unbiased attitude and absolute refraining from any use of force. An impartial role of the United Nations is of utmost importance for the progress of the peace process and the maintenance of the prestige of the Organization.

108. As the State continuing the personality of the SFR of Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has maintained and confirmed as one of its priorities the orientation towards the development of good-neighbourly relations and all-round cooperation with all countries in the Balkans and beyond. Mutual respect, establishment of confidence and development of cooperation on the basis of sovereign equality and mutual interests is the right way to strengthen peace and stability in the Balkans, along the lines of its full integration into European processes.

109. The FR of Yugoslavia has always been, and remains, open for all the activities and the initiatives of its Balkan partners aimed at development of cooperation and mutual ties, as well as at strengthening confidence and stability. The FR of Yugoslavia will continue to render its full contribution

to such joint efforts, aware of its role, possibilities and geo-strategic position.

110. The FR of Yugoslavia declared in its Constitution of 27 April 1992 its commitment to the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris of the CSCE, underlining in particular that it has no territorial claims against its neighbours. Yugoslavia's orientation and practice are based on the assessment that respect for the independence and territorial integrity of every country in the region is in the interest of each individual country and in the interest of the region as a whole. On this basis, Yugoslavia will work on the establishment of relations of confidence and understanding with its neighbours, guided by the principles of good-neighbourliness.

111. As a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-confessional country, the FR of Yugoslavia guarantees by its Constitution to all its citizens equality, rights and freedoms, irrespective of their nationality or religion. The provisions of the Yugoslav Constitution providing for the possibility for the former Yugoslav republics wishing to do so, to join the FR of Yugoslavia bear out the readiness of the FR of Yugoslavia to develop its future relations with its neighbours on that basis.

112. The FR of Yugoslavia is defined in its Constitution as a State of all its citizens. Accordingly, it attaches exceptional attention to the exercise of the rights of the more than 20 national minorities and ethnic groups living as equal citizens in its territory. The Yugoslav Constitution and laws guarantee special minority rights in the field of education, the use of the mother tongue, information, culture, etc. in accordance with European and world standards. Under the Copenhagen Document of the OSCE this implies also the obligation of the members of national minorities, as Yugoslav citizens, to be loyal to the FR of Yugoslavia.

113. According to the principles of international law and the documents of the United Nations and the OSCE, the right to self-determination belongs to constituent peoples and not to national minorities or territories.

114. After the imposition of the sanctions of the United Nations Security Council on the FR of Yugoslavia, the basic rights of all its citizens irrespective of their national origin, have been threatened. In such conditions, the FR of Yugoslavia is making every effort to reduce as much as possible the consequences of the sanctions for the exercise of minority rights.

115. The FR of Yugoslavia rightly expects that the exercise of the rights of the members of the Serbian and Montenegrin national minorities living in other Balkan States will be adequately protected and respected.

116. A more rapid social and economic development based on the natural, market and geo-political specificities of the region, the overcoming of the economic gap dividing the North and West of Europe from the rest of the continent and the neutralization of the economic losses caused by the sanctions are important prerequisites for long-term stability, security and an integral development of the Balkans and the whole of South-East Europe. All these call for the

immediate preparation of comprehensive financial plans whose implementation should include, first and foremost, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as the European financial institutions and private capital. In this context priority should be given to the implementation of the regional projects in the field of infrastructure, transport, energy, the environment and tourism, as well as to labour-intensive projects in the economy, including services.

117. As all Balkan countries are determined to join European integration in the future, an important step in that direction could be the creation of conditions for the establishment of regional free-trade zones or a customs union. With the establishment of a community of countries with a free flow of goods, capital and labour, the Balkan economies would greatly facilitate their accelerated access to the developed part of the European market. The FR of Yugoslavia fully supports this idea and considers that it would be useful to begin concrete talks on the multilateral level in order to realize this idea, as it is in the interest of all Balkan factors and of Europe.

118. In order to make full use of the advantages of this region for the transit of goods, services and passengers, it is necessary to devote greater attention to this matter and to provide capital for the modernization of railroads, roads, ports, airports, PTT networks and energy transmission systems. Because of its geographic position bridging parts of Europe, particularly in the north to south and north-west to south-east directions, it is natural that the FR of Yugoslavia is interested in the modernization of communications. To that end, it has prepared, in cooperation with the neighbouring countries, a number of specific projects which are ready for implementation.

119. The energy resources of the Balkans are limited, which makes it incumbent on the countries of the region to cooperate in the rational use and exploitation of all types of energy and energy resources. It is therefore most natural that the priority areas of cooperation are the use of electrical energy and the exploitation of gas and oil. The interconnection and promotion of the joint operation of the electrical energy systems of the Balkan countries, the connection of gas pipeline systems on a long-term basis, as well as the transit of natural gas from third countries, are the strategic priorities of the region and can serve as the basis for the development of each individual country.

120. Cooperation in the field of the environment is of existential importance for all the countries in the region. The FR of Yugoslavia considers that, through various forms of cooperation, the Balkan countries should establish the Balkan Environment Programme (BEP), as a regional variant of UNEP.

121. Particularly dangerous is the trend towards the relocation of outdated technologies and depositing of hazardous poisonous wastes from the developed part of Europe in the Balkans, particularly in some of its least developed countries. In view of the ongoing trends and great interdependence, it is an illusion to believe that any part of Europe can protect itself effectively or accomplish any economic interest by the transfer of outdated technologies, poisonous products or wastes to other parts of the continent and even to other parts of the world. Environmental protection of the Balkans merits greater

attention not only because it is in the interest of the people of the Balkans but because it is in the interest of all the people of Europe.

122. "The Balkans to the Balkan peoples" implies the mobilization of all human and natural resources to serve the purpose of prosperity and a richer life of all Balkan peoples. This implies the strengthening of mutual confidence, the settlement of all controversial issues by negotiations and the intensification of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Balkans. The Balkans, as an integral part of Europe, is fully open to cooperation and the establishment of ties, as well as to respect for the interdependence of economic, political, cultural and security interests, since the political, economic and security architecture of Europe and the Balkans constitute a natural whole.